

BUILDING CONSCIOUSNESS FOR ENVIRONMENT/ BIODIVERSITY  
THE ROLE OF THE MASSMEDIA IN SHAPING POLICY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

BY.

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# OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- I. SYNOPSIS OF WHAT IS EXPECTED OF JOURNALISTS AND THE MEDIA;
- II. THE CBD & SHORT HISTORY-GLOBALLY AND NATIONALLY;
- III. SOME SPECIFICS OF WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE MEDIA ;
- IV. CONCLUSION AND Q AND A

# INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESENTATION

- Biodiversity is life; managing it unsustainably poses threat to human survival. The threat posed to biodiversity resources is due to over exploitation way above the carrying capacity of the environment/human beings.
- Addressing overexploitation of natural resources and its impacts on the environment can only be resolved when stakeholders from the policy, programs and community levels get the right education and information to change attitude(s).
- The mass media is clothed with the authority to inform and educate stakeholders in favor of sustainable resource and environmental management

The FIVE key Skills regarded as vital qualities a journalist must possess if he/she will make a noticeable impact:

- Good command of the language of publication. Here emphasis is on English. Journalists must have very good command of the English language as a tool to communicate. It is essential given that stories a reporter files have to be readable or clear, concise and at all times to the point;
- Communication skill is the next one any good journalist must possess. Why? Because if messages get across well to the public, the reporter must master the skill of communicating very well.
- Typing skill is a must a journalist must possess; minimum of 40 words per minute (WPM) is the minimum; The demand has further increased with the age of computer and social media.

# FIVE SKILLS FOR JOURNALISTS Cont.

- One essential/basic skill a journalist should have to facilitate professional practice is shorthand. You have to be able to take a good note in shorthand. Why? It is not possible to carry a computer everywhere to cover events.
- One intriguing skill a Journalist must have is to develop a good working knowledge of the law. To avoid costly litigation.

# MEDIA CAN:

- Make any issue major by focusing public attention to it;
- Media have its own faults, if we want to remain free and act in an informed manner;
- There is no alternative to the media(But Professor Burch a US authority on the influence of the media)

The media, as the Fourth citizen, principal role is to serve as a mirror displaying a nation's values and influential participants in the culture altering National Dialogue by:

- focusing attention to issues and trends so important to society (Liberian people can take environmental issues serious if the media d focus public attention on it);
- unsustainable exploitation of biodiversity resources, land clearance , the need for conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity;
- conversion of tropical forests into agro-industrial plantations such oil palm, rubber, cocoa plantations in particular and thus contribute to the climate crisis;
- To address the environmental crisis in Africa and in particular in our country; the availability of information to stakeholders which the media are well placed to take on, can be one of the principal ways to resolve the problem given that information which is power will be in the hand of the people;
- Media in this context is defined as communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, or promotional messages are disseminated. Media includes every broadcasting and narrow casting medium such as newspapers, magazines, Television, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, internet.....

# DEFINITIONS OF MEAs TERMS

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- **Accession---** is the act whereby a state accepts the offer or the opportunity to become a party to a treaty already negotiated and signed by other states. It has the same legal effect as ratification. Accession usually occurs after the treaty has entered into force. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his function as depositary;
- **Adoption---** is the formal act by which the form and content of a proposed treaty text are established. As a general rule, the adoption of the text of a treaty takes place through the expression of the consent of the states participating in the treaty-making process. Treaties that are negotiated within an international organization will usually be adopted by a resolution of a representative organ of the organization whose membership more or less corresponds to the potential participation in the treaty in question. A treaty can also be adopted by an international conference which has specifically been convened for setting up the treaty, by a vote of two thirds of the states present and voting, unless, by the same majority, they have decided to apply a different rule.
- **Agreements as a generic term---**: The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties employs the term “international agreement” in its broadest sense. On the one hand, it defines treaties as “international agreements” with certain characteristics. On the other hand, it employs the term “international agreements” for instruments, which do not meet its definition of “treaty”. Its Art.3 refers also to “international agreements not in written form”. The term “international agreement” in its generic sense consequently embraces the widest range of international instruments;
- **Conference of the Parties (COP)--** The supreme body of the Convention. It currently meets once a year to review the Convention’s progress. The word “conference” is not used here in the sense of “meeting” but rather of “association”. The “Conference” meets in sessional periods, for example, the “fourth session of the Conference of the Parties.”

# DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Convention as a specific term:** Whereas in the last century the term “convention” was regularly employed for bilateral agreements, it now is generally used for formal multilateral treaties with a broad number of parties. Conventions are normally open for participation by the international community as a whole, or by a large number of states. Usually the instruments negotiated under the auspices of an international organization are entitled conventions (e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969).
- **Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA)---** A generic term for treaties, conventions, protocols, and other binding instruments related to the environment. Usually applied to instruments of a geographic scope wider than that of a bilateral agreement (i.e., between two States).

# DEFINITION OF TERMS CONT.

- **Treaty**--- A treaty is provided in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), adopted in 1969. Article 2(1)(a) of the VCLT states that, ‘an international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments (e.g. Exchange of Notes/Exchange of Letters) and whatever its particular designation”.
- **Rio Conventions**--- Three environmental conventions, two of which were adopted at the 1992 “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), while the third, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), was adopted in 1994. The issues addressed by the three treaties are related -- in particular, climate change can have adverse effects on desertification and biodiversity -- and through a Joint Liaison Group, the secretariats of the three conventions take steps to coordinate activities to achieve common progress;

# Introduction To Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

- Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) is a generic term for treaties, Conventions, protocols, and other binding instruments related to the environment; usually applied to a geographic scope wider than that of a bilateral agreement. (Bilateral Agreement is agreement between two States).
- The agreements, primarily produced by the United Nations, cover . such as atmospheric polices, freshwater policies, hazardous waste and substance policies, the marine environment, nature conservation policies, noise pollution, and nuclear safety. An environmental agreement between the two nations is known as a bilateral environmental agreement (Birnie, 1977).

# Introduction MEAs CONT.

- Genesis: During the influx of industrialization in the 19th century, environmental issues/challenges were clearly overlooked. These environmental challenges and threats, ranging from pollution, acid rain, deforestation and desertification, destruction of the ozone layer, to early signs of climate change etc, had grown to the level of increasingly unacceptable. The use of multilateral environment agreements began in 1857 when a German agreement regulated the flow of water from Lake Constance to Austria and Switzerland (Kim, 2013).
- The Bretton Woods Conference in 1945(the World Bank and its associated organizations such as the IMF) had first revealed that the World Bank had started to experience an expanded role in intervening with the economic and social policies of the Third World. The initiative to set up the new organization came from UNESCO as a concurrence to encourage international cooperation in the protection of nature, to promote national and international action and to compile, analyze and distribute information (Holdgate, 1999).

# INTRODUCTION TO MEAs cont.

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), founding International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUPN), was established in 1948. In 1968, Sweden first suggested to the United Nations Economic and Social Council ECOSOC (now UNESCO) the idea of having a UN conference to focus on human interactions with the environment. The General Assembly in 1969 decided to convene a conference in 1972 with the focus on “stimulating and providing guidelines for action by national government and international organizations” facing environmental issues (DeSombre, 2006);
- Since the emergence of the multilateral environmental agreements there were few agreements signed, however since the creation of the UNEP in 1972 the number of environmental agreements have increased considerably.

# UN CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT- STOCKHOLM 1972

- The relationship between economic development and environmental degradation was first placed on the international agenda in 1972, at the UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5–16 in 1972. Representatives of 113 nations and over 400 civil society organizations attended the Stockholm Conference. The Declaration of the Conference stated that “every person deserved a clean, healthy environment”. The conference also produced an Action Plan, which contained 109 specific recommendations for improving the environment, including limiting the use of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).
- With the creation of UNEP after the conference in 1972 to act as global catalyst for action to protect the environment, governments and nations failed to take meaningful actions to integrate environmental concerns in national development, decision-making and industrial development with least concern for the environment continues unabated and thus resulted into environmental problems as ozone depletion, global warming, water pollution and especially accelerated natural resources exploitation such forest, gold, diamond, iron ore until it reached uncontrolled or crisis level by the early 80s.
- The UN in a crisis management style situation by 1983, set up the World Commission on Environment and Development to propose actions needed to take to address the side effects of industrial development to the human environment.
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# BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION-OUR COMMON FUTURE 1987

- The Commission initiated an inquest style study to establish the gravity of the environmental crisis the World was facing as a result of careless industrial development practices been pursued globally and came up with set proposals to correct the situation. The Brundtland Commission also known as the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) objective was to bring nations together to undertake sustainable Development together. The Commission coined the definition of sustainable development as “development that satisfies the needs of current generation of human without compromising the needs of future generations of humans to meet theirs’ need.”
- The Brundtland was established by the UN General Assembly in 1984 purposely to rally countries to work together to pursue sustainable development. The General Assembly chose Madam Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway at it Chairperson to find common solution to environment and development problems globally.

# COMMON FUTURE

- The Commission named after its chair, put forward the concept of sustainable development as an alternative approach to economic growth that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The establishment of the commission was a wake up call to the World to deal with the conflict between industrial developments in it globalized economic growth and the accelerating ecological degradation occurring on a global scale as result. The challenge was to harmonize prosperity with ecology or as the activists put , to pursue economic development within the carrying capacity of the environment
- The Commission was officially dissolved in December, 1987 after the release of its report entitles, “Our Common future” also known as the ‘Brundtland Report’. The report defines the meaning of ‘sustainable development’ as already defined above, as development initiative which meets the needs of present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The Commission was dissolved and replaced in April, 1988 with new organization named-‘Center for Our Future’. Members of the Commission were drawn from 21 different nations (both developed and developing countries). Please see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/> for easy reference.
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## II THE CONVENTION ON BIODIVERSITY

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is one of the three conventions that make up the Rio Conventions. The other two are- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- These three Conventions constitute the Rio Conventions. The three conventions were named “RIO” after the City where the United Nations held the second largest conference on environment, natural resources management and development. The conference was held in the Brazilian city call “ Rio de Janeiro” in 1992. The first major international Conference on the environment and development was held in 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden

# Convention on Biodiversity

- Biological Diversity which is called short “Biodiversity” refers to according the UN living thing such as animals, fish, trees, etc, their ecosystems where they live and their species.
- There are terrestrial biodiversity- referring to those living on land;
- Aquatic biodiversity- referring those living inland fresh water body such as St. John River, St. Paul River, Nile River, etc;
- Marine Biodiversity-This refer to those living in the Oceans of the World such as sharks, Whales etc
- We have Dry land/sub-humid /savanna biodiversity, island biodiversity, mountain biodiversity, agriculture biodiversity,

# Convention on Biodiversity

- The CBD as convention was signed by more than 100 countries attending the Rio Conference known as the Earth Summit on June 5,1992 and as of now 196 countries are parties to this convention currently.
- Liberia Signed and ratified this convention on November 8,2000 ;
- The purpose of this convention is to help nations of the World to manage biodiversity resources (animals, trees, insects, rivers. Ecosystems) manage these important asset of the world in sustainable manner to benefit present and future generations.

# CONVENTION BIODIVERSITY

- The convention require Nations who are members which is commonly called parties, as it is the case of the other two, to take step to protect biodiversity resources;
- Article 13 required parties to prepare National Strategy and Action Plan for the management of biodiversity. That plan is called National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan ( NBSAP) This plan report on the status, trend and management of biodiversity resources nationally and roles of the various stakeholders including local communities and women;
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- Article 26; on the other hand, requires parties to provide regular update on actions taken to implement the plan contained in the NBSAP and is called National Report. National Report is monitoring tool of the implementation of the programme and activities contain in the NBSAP;
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- Besides these two key requirements holding parties accountable of how they manage their biodiversity resources and ecosystems, you have also have thematic specialized reports dealing with specific ecosystems and species of both fauna and flora( animals and tree) species

# STEPS LIBERIA HAS TAKEN SINCE IT BEGAN PARTY TO THE CONVENTION

- Liberia has take number of steps in term of programme and activities to protect biodiversity resources at the EPA and other biodiversity relation line ministries and agencies such as FDA, National Aquaculture Authority, MOA, Mine and Energy etc.....
- Liberia developed her first NBSAP in 2004
- It documented for the first time nationally biodiversity unique to Liberia;
- Set up national programme to management those resources;
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- Second: It prepared its second NBSAP in 2017 known as “Revised NBSAP of 2017; with the appropriate targets, programme and activities. It implementation runs from 2017-2025;
- National Target 1of the Revised NBSAP say: by 2020 at least 60% of Liberians will learn something about the need and important of biodiversity resources in Liberia and the World;

# The 2017 NBSAP says there are number of activities for biodiversity loss in Liberia:

- Shefting Cultivation or subsistence farming methods is causing serious problem;
- Unsustainable logging practices
- Miniing is causing serious loss of biodiversity;
- Plantation Agriculture such of rubber and oil palm plantations like Firestone, Same Deby oil palm plantation etc;
- Construction of dwelling places in wetland;
- Inadequate land use planning;
- Limited knowledge on traditional natural resource management practices and codes;
- The Revised NBSAP says the most threatening ecosystems in Liberia are:
- Forest ecosystem;
- Coastal and marine ecosystem;
- Agriculture biodiversity;

# NATIONAL REPORTS

- On meeting her obligation on National Report, Liberia has met her obligations when it comes on this; Liberia has written all six National of the Reports like any other nation since the convention came into being. The last which is the Sixth National Report, was completed March,2019.
- The report highlighted grim picture of the status of biodiversity in Liberia;
- The report says biodiversity loss has increase despite the increase in programmes and activities to protect biodiversity resources;
- The report pointed out that;
- Mining,
- Plantation agriculture,
- Logging practices
- Degradation of mangrove ecosystem due to home construction, harvesting of fires wood among others;
- The question is what the media doing to high like these problems to bring pressure to bear on policy-makers ?

# LET'S PUT IT IN CONTEXT HERE

- media bring people from different backgrounds together by making them understand the problems the society has through advocacy for change;
- In environmental/biodiversity management, the key is creating a community whose main aim is to curb environmental degradation through mitigation and enhancing environmental conservation;
- Environmental protection complements development;
- Environmental protection efforts shall not be portrayed as competing with the development needs and aspirations of the present people. Create healthy debate about values as they relate to ecological and social sustainability;
- The media have no distance/language barrier at any level; grass-root, levels locals listen to local vernacular stations, to then national, and international level through other forms of media bringing everyone aim at achieving a common goal that is how to achieve environmental sustainability

The media are best suited to clearly present the problem and its gravity. This can happen through:

- awareness and participation by making information widely available;
- conservation of natural resources through simplified form so that every person including those at the grass-root levels can clearly understand;
- presents the best methods the experts agreed on to conserve biodiversity resources and mitigate the impacts of environmental degradation;
- The media controls dialogue and social action that helps to mitigate environmental impacts and to have a healthy and sustainable environment
- Media creates environmental initiatives to do something better; example, how to do farming such that you do not need to cut down the forest (they call it conservation agriculture);
- The media influences local initiatives; example, micro forestry program to address forest cover removal. Lots of examples of such in Kenya ;

# Media conducts research of environmental issues:

- Why there is flooding every year in Clara Town and what responsible?
- What needs to be done about it to resolve the problem instead of residents appealing every year for help;
- Why and how kind there are wild fire out break in Lofa most of the time and storm causing huge damages every year in Nimba; what responsible and what need to be done to address it ?
- Media take on the role of linking the community and the government on environmental issues.
- This is achieved through direct consultation with members of the government and community on environmental such erosion, forest destruction, cutting of mangroves, sand mining etc; through reporting;

# Cont.

- Media makes community activities visible in the age of social media; to help the activists to network and communicate better
- Media influence environmental campaign through its advocacy role which seeks to involve and promote behavior change rather than business as usual;
- In order to achieve environmental sustainability it is of great importance to integrate media as agents of change (information/education/awareness)

You have the chance to cover the last day of a car components factory which is closing down. Four hundred workers are being made redundant and the factory is blaming foreign competition and the recession. In no more than 300 words describe what pictures, sound and interviews you would gather for television and radio to tell the story.

- Today is the second day of massive demonstration involving hundreds of thousands of citizens in Monrovia and five provisional towns over increase in price of gasoline.
- Government announced a twenty five percent increase in the pump price of gasoline over the weekend. The government blamed the decision on the continuous increase in price of petroleum on the global market.
- Road blocks are mounted everywhere in Monrovia manned by gang of youths making it virtually impossible for free movement of people and vehicles. They are mainly targeting government vehicles and officials.
- Our correspondent in Monrovia who toured the city, says the demonstrators had taken over everything main towns and cities in the country with police doing very little to intervene.
- President Ellen Johnson Sireleaf appeared on television in a bid to calm nerve to no avail as tens of thousands of demonstrators converged on a stadium for a rally. Meanwhile President Sireleaf accused opposition leaders of fusing the situation for political capital.
- Monrovia remain virtually paralyzed with limited supply of consumer goods which normally come from the interior as motorists are afraid to put their vehicles on the roads for fear of being damage.
- Whatever the outcome, the government decision to increase gasoline pump price was not taken for bluff, but global price increases.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH IT THIS IS HOW SOMEONE APPROACH. What wrong with it and how could you approach it from the your media outlet?

Imagine you are a TV reporter covering a demonstration, maybe against a tax, a new law, or after a political or social decision that had been made. Write the first 200 words of the coverage’.

- Intro: ANCHOR
- CUIN: The Free Lemon Company in the West African state of Liberia was Monday a scene of tears and silent as the more than 150 years old company finally closed its door due to the effects of the worldwide economic meltdown..
- Free Lemon produces multiple vehicles and motor cycles parts for export in East and southern Africa and the Europe. Our Correspondent Bindu Brown reports.
- CUIN:
- Addressing the 400 strong work force who became redundant as a result of the closure, CEO Robertson Peterson said the decision to close down and layout the work force was imposed on the company by global economic problem.
- CUIN:
- “We are sad today that we are not only cease to operate but to discontinue our wonderful relationship with our workers. We will ensure despite the difficult, that our workers get all their benefits.”

# CURIN

Voices of workers praise singing the company Chief Executive Officers and top management team and live picture of workers parking their individual belongings and scene of battle cry by union leadership to mark the sad chapter in the company's history.

- The union leader told reporters that the workers were in solidarity with the company; union and company had agreed that fifty per cent of salary arrears and severance benefits be paid in three stages beginning with 50 down payment.
- CUEIN:
- “We understand the situation; it is not Free Lemon but capitalism. It is now time that governments take actions to control *speculators* who are the real culprits.”

CONT.

**Out cue**

- ANCHOR
- James Morris, President of the radical left-wing worker union speaking with our correspondent in Monrovia.
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# ANYONE WHO WANTS TO BE FREED THERE HAVE TO BE:

- MASS-MEDIA TO PUT PUBLIC FOCUS ON ISSUES OF COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS SUCH FOREST COVER IN Liberia;
- COVID 19, EBOLA, Malaria
- Widespread of rape cases
- Human rights violations etc

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING-  
Q AND A